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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004400

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: INSPECTORS GENERAL HOLD EMERGENCY MEETING IN
RESPONSE TO SIX IG DISMISSALS

REF: BAGHDAD 4379

Classified By: Economic Minister Counselor Thomas Delare for reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. In reaction to the reported removal of Inspectors General (IG) from five ministries and the Council of Ministers, an emergency meeting of all the IGs and representatives from the TNA Committee on Integrity was held on October 23. The discussions focused on the integrity and independence of the IG system during which the attendees: 1) requested draft legislation that would both enhance the IG's independence and protect them from politically motivated dismissals; 2) complained about the lack of due process for those who were removed; and 3) pondered how to handle a politically sensitive request by the TNA for evaluations of all Deputy Ministers and Directors General. End summary.

2. (SBU) Over the past six months, IRMO technical advisors and GOI officials have reported the impending removal or transfer of several Iraqi IGs. Details of the plan finally came to light last week. According to IRMO reports, the IGs from the Ministries of Transportation, Electricity, Finance, Agriculture, Trade and the IG for the General Secretariat of the Ministers' Council, are to be removed, while the IG from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works will move to the vacant IG position at Ministry of Defense. A former IG and current TNA member, Judge Zakia Haaki, will reportedly return as IG to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which is also currently vacant. We should emphasize, however, that official notification of these changes has not yet been confirmed.

3. (SBU) In response to this shake-up, the IGs held an emergency meeting on October 23, attended by Econoff, to discuss what they perceive to be major threats to the integrity and independence of the IG system. Held immediately after the regular weekly meeting between the IG Executive Council, headed by Dr. Adel Abdullah, IG for the Ministry of Health, and the leadership of the TNA Committee on Integrity, the emergency meeting was attended by a majority of the IGs, as well as several members of the Integrity Committee. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chairmen of the Committee on Integrity, Kamal al-Saadi.

Legislation to Strengthen the IG

4. (C) Al-Saadi opened the meeting by stressing the need for a strong and independent IG system in order to build a stable, prosperous and democratic Iraq. In particular, he highlighted the IG's dependence on their respective ministers for funding and resources, as well as the authority that ministers have to dismiss IGs, which has impeded IG effectiveness. In order to remedy what they perceive to be structural weaknesses in the system, the group is preparing legislation that will clearly establish the IGs as independent entities whose authority emanates directly from the TNA. Included in the legislation would be provisions for "fire walled" budgets and a direct reporting structure from the IGs to the TNA. Also a possibility given the recent shake up, would be provisions reserving the authority for removing an IG from office to the TNA, President, Deputy Presidents or the Prime Minister. (Note: According to CPA Order 57 that established the IG system, IGs are funded by each ministry at the discretion of the minister. An IG reports directly to the minister, and that minister may dismiss the IG for cause. The minister must report the dismissal to the Prime Minister and the TNA, who can then overturn it. End note.) The plan is to present the law to the TNA before the end of year. Al-Saadi also stressed the need for standardized procurement and contracting procedures in all ministries.

IG Dismissals and Transfers

5. (C) The reported dismissal of several IGs prompted a heated discussion among the attendees. Most of the participants attributed the firings to Commission on Public Integrity (CPI) Commissioner Radhi, who they claimed had overstepped his authority and acted in a non-transparent way to dismiss rivals for

political purposes. Others criticized that no explanation or notice had been given for the dismissals. The IG from the Ministry of Trade (among those relieved of his position) bitterly complained that "his name and dignity were insulted," despite his being a valued ministry employee for 32 years and his submission of 970 investigative reports to the CPI since January 2005. In response, al-Saadi reiterated his belief that only the TNA had the right to terminate an IG and that Commissioner Radhi was establishing a very dangerous precedent by superseding the legislature. He believes that the terminations were motivated by politics and religion, and resolved to meet with Commissioner Radhi to discuss these issues. Many of the attendees also questioned whether Judge Radhi has the authority to transfer IGs from one ministry to another, even if he does not have the ability to terminate them.

16. (C) The IGs also cited U.S. interference with their independence. Judge Zakia stated that when she had been the IG for the Ministry of Labor, she was given a letter written by a U.S. military officer stating that she was being too tough on U.S. allies at the ministry. The letter recommended that she be transferred to the Ministry of Justice after which Zakia found herself "in limbo between Ministries," before being sent back to the Ministry of Labor. All of this, she said, occurred because "I was just doing my job." (Comment: We are researching this charge to make sure the Embassy speaks with one voice on this issue. End comment.)

TNA Requests Ministry Evaluations

17. (C) The meeting ended with the IGs voicing their discomfort with a recent request by the TNA, and possibly the Council of Ministers, to prepare performance evaluations of the Deputy Ministers and Director Generals in their respective ministries. Of particular concern to the IGs was the lack of performance criteria from the TNA and the uncertainty regarding their intended use. TNA members at the meeting stated that the reports would be used as a tool to decide who stays and who goes during the transition to the next government, but the IGs fear that the reports will only further politicize and weaken their efforts to combat corruption.

Comment

18. (C) The IG system is an important part of Iraq's anti-corruption institutions, but it is still very weak and prone to the same ills facing all of Iraq's institutions -- corruption and political and sectarian rivalries. While the IGs lamented the "unfair" dismissal of their colleagues, there are also credible reports that at least some of the dismissed IGs were incompetent and/or corrupt (see reftel). Many of the IGs blame Commissioner Radhi for the firings, but it has been said that Radhi was merely trying to improve the effectiveness the IG system by recommending these changes to the Prime Minister, who made the final decision. Whatever the motivation, it appears that Radhi played a large role in the deliberations, adding fuel to the growing tensions between CPI and many of the IGs. The Embassy will continue to follow this issue closely to see if there is a political agenda at play, especially as replacement IGs are nominated.
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